

HAYTER, Thomas
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SE R M O N

Preached before

His Grace WILLIAM Duke of Devonshire,

P R E S I D E N T,

AND THE

G O V E R N O R S

OF THE

LONDON HOSPITAL,

O R

I N F I R M A R Y,

F O R T H E

RELIEF of all Sick and Diseased Persons, especially
MANUFACTURERS, and SEAMEN in MERCHANT-
SERVICE, &c.

A T

St. Lawrence's Church near Guildhall,

On THURSDAY, March 16, 1758.

By THOMAS Lord Bishop of NORWICH.

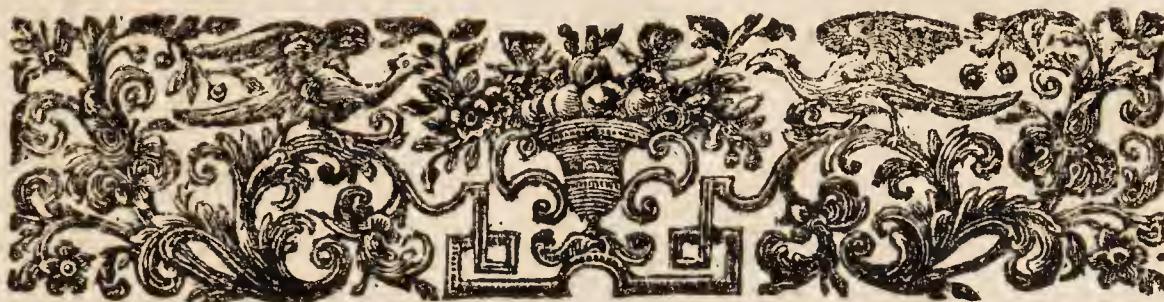
G. Hayter

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St. LUKE IX. II.

And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them, that had need of healing.

AN the beginning of this chapter we are informed by the Evangelist, that *Jesus called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all Devils, and to cure diseases*; and that having, in this wonderful manner, qualified them for the work of their ministry, he sent them to execute a commission, exactly suited to the character and office of the Redeemer of mankind, who sent them; and worthy of the infinite goodness of God, in whose name they were sent; a commission to *preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.*

THE Apostles, nothing doubting, but that their master, who had commanded them to do things so far above their own abilities, would enable them to perform his orders, departed, and went through the towns preaching the gospel, and healing every where. Having now, probably for the first time, discharged both parts of this heavenly commission, which was equally calculated to afford relief to the bodies and souls of men, they returned to Jesus, and told him all they had done. And he took them and went aside privately into a desart place, belonging to the city called Bethsaida; in order probably to lay before them, in the stilness of solitude and retirement, to what end both their teaching and their miracles were to be ultimately referred and directed. But the event, which he undoubtedly foresaw, shews that he had a further view in withdrawing himself; and that he meant to improve his short retreat from the croud, into an opportunity of instructing, not only his own disciples, but the multitude also, which soon made a numerous audience about him in the desart. For, *the people*, when they knew where he was, followed him. They were struck at the suddenness of his departure, to whom they had just before attended with wonder and gladness, whilst they heard him speak, as never man spake, and saw him at the same time restore feet to the lame, and eyes to the blind. This sensible demonstration of his having so compassionate a feeling and tenderness for their

their infirmities, together with an ability of curing diseases, which no human skill could cure, fully convinced them that he acted by a divine Authority ; and that he was moreover, from his own love toward them, desirous to conduct them to that immortal life of happiness, which he had first brought to light with so much clearness. As soon therefore as they had discovered where he was, they eagerly pressed after their benevolent salutary Instructor.

Jesus knew, from what commendable motives they had thus unseasonably broken in upon him ; he saw they were in a fair teachable temper of mind, and honestly impatient to be again instructed by him ; and seeing this, *he received them*, as being fitly prepared to hear again from him the glad tidings of salvation : For *to this end he came into the world*, and to this all he said or did was subordinate. Accordingly, *he spake unto them of the kingdom of heaven* ; and to fix his instructions upon them more effectually by fresh proofs of kindness, *he healed such of them as had need of healing*.

WE are expressly informed in the Gospel by Christ himself, *that he hath given us an Example, that we should do as he did to us* : and so graciously did he adapt his Example to our wants and weaknesses, that if we meditate, as we ought, upon the plain reasons, and obvious circumstances of his conduct in almost every part and incident of his ministry ; we may, even in those

extraordinary instances,¹ where we cannot strictly follow his steps, be furnished with some practical admonition, to guide and order our own. For every action of his, being uniformly directed to one and the same design of making men wise unto salvation, either places some moral truth in a light, in which we had not before considered it; or familiarly points out to us the properest time and manner of laying the truths of religion before the mind. Now this, in the affair of religious instruction, is a consideration of the utmost consequence: for moral and religious truths, having a close connection with our happiness, and being fitted to govern and restrain our actions, our affections are always strongly interested for or against them; and their influence greatly depends upon the disposition we are in, when they are proposed to us, and the season and manner of proposing them.

The heart then must be warmed, and the affections engaged on the side of virtue and religion, before the light of such truths will strike upon the understanding with a proper force. But when the Christian instructor hath gained this principal point; it will be his own fault, if he doth not gradually lead on the mind to further degrees of religious improvements. For want of observing these precautions, or from our not sufficiently improving the advantage we have gained by observing them, our most cogent arguments, upon the most momentous truths and duties of Christianity, are too often urged with little or no suc-

success; and our best-designed charities, when they have softened and composed the temper of the persons relieved, into that serious frame, which fits them for being wrought upon by religious instruction, not being carried on to operate in the full extent of their moral efficacy, stop short of producing their most beneficial effects, and have not their perfect work.

THE text supplies us with a pertinent instance to illustrate, what I have been observing in general; and the illustration will not only lead me to make some reflections, particularly suitable to the design of this Solemnity, but will perhaps suggest to us one of the most effectual methods of doing the most substantial lasting good. With this view it is my present intention to consider, how advantageously christian instruction stands connected with this humane, this christian dispensation of charity.

Now, in the text, you find our Saviour himself doing, what he commanded and empowered his apostles to do, *viz. speaking of the kingdom of God, and healing those that had need of healing*: It may not be improper here to remind you, that by the kingdom of God, of which Jesus spake, we are to understand that *dispensation of grace and truth through Jesus Christ*, into which we were all baptized;—that revelation of the infinite goodness of God towards mankind, which we all profess to believe; and which certainly requires *that*

that mind to be in us, which was in Jesus Christ, when he healed them, that had need of healing.

PERHAPS it will be said,—What practical direction can be drawn for our own use from the pattern of our Saviour, as he here exhibits himself to us, teaching with an infallible wisdom, and recommending what he taught, by miracles of beneficence?—One important lesson it plainly and forcibly inculcates by the weight and authority of an example, which can neither deceive nor misguide us; that a religion founded in the love of God to man, and, in every part of it, designed to promote mutual love amongst men, ought to be recommended, and is ever most effectually recommended, by acts of kindness. For you find that he, who had all power, employed none to enforce his doctrine, but that which was exerted by him in the most astonishing works of tenderness and compassion. And, by such an exertion of his power as this, he demonstrated it to be derived from the Author of all goodness, as well as the Source of all power. Notwithstanding therefore, we cannot copy the miracles, we can imitate, and are by Christ commanded to imitate that spirit of benevolence, which constituted the real moral excellence of all his miracles, and rendered them fit to answer the purpose, for which they were wrought by him.

FURTHER, amidst the various calamities, that are perpetually introducing various scenes of distress, and

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presenting us with different objects of misery and affliction, which both ask and merit our relief, is it a direction of no use or consequence to be taught by the very miracles of our Saviour, that he was most solicitous to restore ease and health to the diseased; that is, to those very objects of compassion, for whose benefit infirmaries are erected? When we read his miraculous cures, constantly bearing testimony to the words of eternal life, are we not admonished, that the redemption he provided for us, took in the whole of man; and that by the working of the same mighty power, which delivered the body from all manner of diseases, he could, at the appointed season, as easily rescue it from the grave, and cloath it with immortality? Are we not therefore strictly and literally exhorted by the pattern exhibited to us in the text, *as we have opportunity to do good unto all men*, in a similar manner, and to the same end that he did; making bodily cures the means and occasions of that christian charity to the souls of men, the benefit of which may, like the soul itself, last for ever, and be gratefully felt and acknowledged through an eternity of happiness?

LET us now take a more distinct view of the peculiar excellence of that charity, which we are assembled to promote, as founded in the truest principles of humanity, and subservient to the most beneficent purposes of religion.

How peculiarly excellent this branch of charity is, we shall neither sensibly feel, nor be with a sufficient warmth of conviction incited to the exercise of it; unless we first consider and examine the nature and consequences of those calamities, under which the sick necessitous sufferers would sink without hope or remedy, if they had no house of medicine, comfort, and charity to resort to.

THIS moral consideration of pain and sickness, will set before us a melancholy affecting subject, which, in the day of health and ease, we studiously banish from our thoughts; tho' it is never more proper to be frequently and seriously meditated upon by us, than when it seems to lie at the greatest distance from us: For these calamities may suddenly, and without any previous warning, overtake us at once, and multitudes are every day surprised by these trying visitations of Providence, from a thousand unforeseen accidents, when they least expected them. We should therefore be prepared beforehand to meet them, whenever they befall us; that we may behave under them like men whose confidence is founded upon the supreme Director of all events, and whose hopes are fixed upon a better world, that lies beyond the reach of accidents and misfortunes, and from which pain and sorrow are for ever excluded. 2

But are these calamities which perpetually beset us, thus numerous? and can prudence supply us with no precaution, that may in some measure arm and guard us against them?—Perhaps it can; and a bare mention of the general causes and occasions of all of them, will inform you, what that guard and protection is, and from whence alone we can have it. Now Pain and Sickness are the necessary portion and lot of mortality, and, by the appointment of Providence, arise unavoidably from the present state and condition of our being. From these therefore in general, even the best men have no exemption: but pain and sickness may be precipitately hurried on upon us by ourselves, and when they are thus hurried on, they become the proper effects and just punishments of our own follies or vices, which were the immediate occasions of them. Against this part of our danger, a life of Virtue is a sure defence: and whenever a good man is afflicted with any of those disorders, to which all men are liable, the severity of it is mitigated, and the burden lightened, by the patience and chearfulness, with which he is enabled to bear whatever God appoints him to suffer. For *a conscience void of offence is a continual feast to him*; and the consolations of the gospel raise and refresh his spirit with a full assurance of approaching happiness. And can we ask or want a more powerful incitement than this, to persevere in a course of virtue; or can there be a more convincing proof of the truth of religion?

INDEED sickness, if we consider it as we ought, will appear to be a gracious instrument in the hands of Providence, for the moral improvement of such creatures, as we are ; and we shall discern, even in the harshest and most grievous circumstances of it, the *mercy* and *goodness* of God *leading us to repentence*, by this wholesome correction. For doth it not, by enfeebling the body, so sensibly remind us of our latter end, as almost to force us upon the wisdom of considering it ? Doth it not deliver us from temptation, by destroying our relish for the gratifications, which seduce us ? Must we not suppose that mind to be past feeling the difference between good and evil, and totally regardless of futurity, upon which no change is wrought by so efficacious a remedy ? On the contrary, do we not find that it often reforms those, whom nothing else could reform ; that it brings the thoughtless to reflect, the dissolute to be serious, and even the miser to be charitable ?

Now in this last hour of trial, through which all of us must sooner or later pass, when no external help, that power can command, or riches purchase, affords either ease or comfort, the truths and duties, the promises and threatenings of religion, may, with the fairest prospect of success, be urged home upon the greatest of the children of men. And when the poor man lyeth upon the bed of languishing, and hath nothing before him *in the life that now is*, but a gloomy

gloomy prospect of want and wretchedness, to explain to him the doctrine of salvation, and refresh him with the certain hope of better things *in the life that is to come*, is, in the strictest sense, *healing him that is broken in heart*: It is indeed an act of humanity no less reasonable and necessary, than *giving him medicine to heal his sickness*.

FROM such an exercise of compassion towards the indigent, sinking under the double weight, of a disordered body and desponding mind, INFIRMARIES derive their peculiar utility and distinguishing recommendation: and compassion so enlarged, as to take in the present ease and future happiness of the patients, acquires all that moral worth, which compleats the amiable idea of christian charity. Compassion is indeed in itself the tenderest and most endearing affection of the human mind; and, in the present state, one of the most necessary of all our social feelings. By it the happy and unhappy are reciprocally linked and recommended to each other, by acts of mercy and returns of gratitude. Without it, that exquisite satisfaction which we enjoy, by applying our wealth or power to the support or the relief of the necessitous, would be totally lost, as we should have no relish for such a satisfaction. On the other hand, even the ordinary calamities of life, meeting with no pity, and consequently with no assistance from others, would become a *burden too heavy for us to bear*. But by the

means of this pleasing painful sympathy, we of course adopt, and *bear*, and ease *one another's burdens*.

BUT it should be remembered, that to act merely as we are ~~impelled~~^{moved} to act, by this delightful impulse, is no virtue in us. To make an act of compassion a proper act of virtue, it must be an act of our reason, freely and deliberately exerted from a sense of duty; for God, who endued us with this social affection, endued us also with reason, to guide us in the exercise of it, and to suit and proportion the relief to the nature of the distress, and to the situation and circumstances of the person who labours under it. Now as this sensibility of heart extends itself more or less thro' the whole of human kind, and keeps some hold even upon the breast of a savage, however trained up and habituated to acts of barbarity; whence could we have this strong, this uniform propensity, which no perverse efforts of ours can totally eradicate, but from the author of our being? He alone could, by the original law of union, that connects a rational soul to a mortal body, thus subject us to the feelings of humanity; or implant in our very frame this familiar convincing proof of his own infinite goodness and compassion towards the children of men. These compassionate feelings, therefore, are as express a declaration of his will, how he expects us to behave towards a fellow-creature in misery, as if he had declared it by a voice from heaven. He hath moreover, in fact, so declared it: and lest we should not attend to his

will,

will, thus inwardly manifested to us, he hath solemnly promulg'd it in his gospel: for human nature and the gospel, proceeding from one and the same author, breathe one and the same spirit, and inculcate one and the same lesson of brotherly kindness and compassion: so that even the irreligious man, who affects to set the Gospel at nought, cannot violate the law of Christ by any instance of cruelty, but he must, at the same time, act in contradiction to the law of humanity written in his heart: and in consequence of this double provision made by God in favour of the afflicted, even in an age when iniquity abounds, works of charity and instances of compassion may abound also.

BUT mere humanity, notwithstanding all the warmth and tenderness with which it sollicits us to remove the pains, and supply the wants of our brethren on this side the grave, drops all concern for them, when they are once laid in that bed of tranquillity. All that lies beyond it, being wrapt up in an impenetrable obscurity by the shadow of death, is considered as a land of darkness, *where all things are forgotten, and where the weary are at rest from their labours.* But christianity throws new light upon this unknown, unregarded part of our existence; and how awful is the scene it discloses to us? An eternity of happiness or misery committed to our choice, and depending upon our behaviour, during our short *sor-journing here on earth.*

THE purpose of God concerning us being so distinctly revealed from heaven, would strike us with terror at the apprehension of our having an interest of such infinite consequence at stake, if the same revelation had not also told us, by the same authority, that *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that all who believe in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* This gracious declaration is not more calculated to dispel our dread, than to enlarge our humanity: and the command, which immediately follows this declaration, that *if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another,* is an express injunction to us, to carry our concern for the well-being of our fellow-creatures beyond the limits of this momentary life, which is as nothing compared *with the days of eternity.*

FOR to the eye of reason, enlightened by so clear a prospect of futurity, and fully informed of that endless state of existence, for which we are all alike destined, and all alike called upon to prepare, a man stupefied by a lethargy, or raging in a delirium, does not more truly appear to be an object of pity, than he whose *conscience is past feeling the difference between good and evil,* and whose whole mind is distracted and inflamed by outrageous passions and appetites, that are incessantly hurrying him into new scenes of guilt and anguish; and *treasuring up for him wrath against the day of wrath,* and *revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

BUT no character is thus deplorably abandoned at once: there are intervals of seriousness in the course of every man's life; and *if the things that belong to his peace*, are, in those favourable moments, laid before him, they will touch him the more sensibly, because he sees them in a more affecting point of view, from having experienced the folly of shutting his eyes against them. Now if we are actuated by a christian spirit, we shall diligently seek those opportunities of doing good; and if we desire to be *merciful, as our father who is in heaven is merciful*, we shall joyfully embrace them, as often as they present and offer themselves to us.

SICKNESS, as I have before observed at large, is ever a season of recollection; wholesome council and advice, therefore, should concur with this instructive providential warning. But the sickness of a poor man, usually drawing after it a want not only of all the comforts, but even of the necessaries of life, is still more afflicting, and consequently operates upon the mind more forcibly. Now when he feels how readily his necessities are supplied, and his infirmities cured, by the aid of the compassionate, he is of course touched with the liveliest emotions of gratitude; and gratitude, under such circumstances, if a right direction be given to it, of itself becomes a fixed principle of good resolutions and religious improvements.

I MUST again remind you, that every genuine affection of human nature, from whatever causes it may be gradually and imperceptibly formed in us, ought to be considered by us, as resulting from His will, who gave us that nature. Now the proper workings of that affection, which we stile gratitude, declare the gracious intention, with which God disposed us to be thus affected.

COMPASSION, as I have just been remarking, is an exquisitely tender sensation: whereas it is the peculiar property of gratitude, *i. e.* of love towards a benefactor, excited by a quick sense of favours received, to be peculiarly warm and active. Accordingly it urges and quickens the mind, with a strong energy, to express the sincerity of that sense, by every method of acknowledging the kindness, which we think will be most acceptable to the bestower of it. That sense so expressed towards an earthly benefactor, inclines him to repeat his kindness with more readiness and pleasure: and suitable returns of gratitude on our part towards God, render us fit objects of his favour and goodness, and qualify us to receive from him still more abundant blessings.

Now though every benefactor is proportionably entitled to our gratitude, God is the great primary object of this affection: and the whole of religion may be resolved into this principle: for the several duties

duties of religion, are but so many different expressions of that gratitude which we owe to God. Indeed it is from this supreme benefactor, that we continually *receive life, and breath, and all things.* He is in truth the original author even of those blessings, which are conveyed to us through the hands of earthly benefactors ; since it is he that both enables and disposes them to be thus beneficent ; and it is from him that we derive the capacity of enjoying any benefit, by whatever instrument it is reached out to us.

ACCORDINGLY the human mind is so constituted, that upon any signal unexpected deliverance, it prompts us by a kind of instinctive piety, to pay our religious acknowledgment to God ; and though the person, who was the immediate agent in effecting that deliverance, is actually standing by us, our eyes and thoughts are naturally lifted up unto the heavens, as the place from whence our help came. Thus, when you give alms to a poor man, who is a real object of charity, does he not of course express his thankfulness to you, by thanking God who put it into your heart to have compassion upon him, and by praying God to bless you in return ? This may be, and without doubt too often is, the mere cant of hypocrisy, but it is in truth the language of nature ; and the hypocrite himself uses it as such, to deceive you more effectually.

CAN we then unkindly, I had almost said uncharitably, surmise, that the patients in INFIRMARIES,

who are under the strongest obligations to be grateful both to God and man, will not be wrought upon, as other men are, by the known stated influence of gratitude? Can we suspect that they will be averse to be instructed in their duty, or not likely to profit by such instruction? The moral effects of sickness itself, which have been distinctly considered in the former part of this discourse, and the cures that are actually performing upon them, leave no room for this harsh suspicion. Experience contradicts it, and the examples which sacred writ hath recorded for our admonition in this respect, forbid it. Of these it will be sufficient to cite two; the first of which is thus related by the inspired historian:

“ As Jesus entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: “ and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, “ he said unto them, Go, shew yourselves unto the priests; and it came to pass, that as they went they “ were cleansed: and one of them, when he saw “ that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud “ voice glorified God, and fell down on his face, “ giving him thanks, and he was a Samaritan: and “ Jesus answered, and said, Were there not ten clean- “ sed, but where are the nine?”

THE other case is not less pertinent, or less remarkable: “ Peter and John were going into the “ temple at the hour of prayer, and a certain man, “ lame

“ lame from his mother’s womb, who was daily laid
“ at the gate of the temple, seeing Peter and John
“ about to go into the temple, asked an alms. Peter
“ said, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I
“ have give I thee: In the name of Jesus of Naz-
“ reth, rise up and walk. And he took him by his
“ right-hand, and lift him up; and immediately his
“ feet and ankle-bones received strength, and he leap-
“ ing up stood and walked, and entered with them
“ into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising
“ God.”

SHOULD these instances not be sufficient to satisfy you, that gratitude, in a similar case, notwithstanding the cure is effected by the ordinary help of medicine, operates in a similar manner, visit the *LONDON-HOSPITAL*. There you may meet with a multitude of living witnesses, who will exemplify the truth of the observation. You will see how joyful, how earnest the patients are to receive the religious instruction, that is regularly offered to them. And if what you yourselves see and hear, determines you to contribute towards so excellent a scheme of charity, you will from thenceforward be able to gratify your mind with this delightful reflection; that by thus applying a small portion of your abundance, which of itself can add nothing to your own happiness, you are constantly instrumental in bestowing true happiness upon a succession of miserable objects, restoring many to health, and *turning many to righteousness*.

IT is then evident from the natural energy and working of those principles, which, by the appointment of God, have a most powerful influence over the mind of man, that INFIRMARIES are peculiarly fitted to be made subservient to the purposes of true religion ; and certainly, at this juncture more especially, there are urgent reasons for cultivating this subserviency, and carrying on this good work to its just state of perfection.

I HAVE before taken notice of a fact, worthy of our most serious attention, and verified by constant experience, that a great number of those diseases and calamities, which compose the long melancholy list of human miseries, are violently and prematurely hurried on upon the guilty sufferers by their own follies and vices. In proportion therefore as immorality spreads and grows more prevalent, diseases of the most loathsome and destructive kind, must be, in the stated course of causes and effects, multiplied. In consequence of this connection between sin, diseases, and death, the same profligacy which wasteth the substance, and impairs the strength of individuals, doth likewise disturb the order of society, and weaken the vigour of government ; and, in an age that is allowed to be remarkably corrupt and licentious, INFIRMARIES will, and cannot but be filled faster than the liberal hand of charity can raise or enlarge them.

I do not mention this unhappy source of pain, of sickness, and of indigence, in order to abate your compassion for any of the miserable objects, in whose behalf I am now imploring your assistance. Their present distress, from whatever cause it proceeded, is too certain to be questioned, too pitiable not to be relieved: and it would ill become such obnoxious creatures as we are, to be *extreme to mark what is amiss*, and, especially whilst we are recommending mercy, to examine real wretchedness with rigour and severity.

BUT in this place, and upon this occasion, I cannot pass over in silence an evil, the complaint of which is loud and universal; that a spirit of licentiousness hath infected the minds, and corrupted the morals of the common people in this metropolis, beyond the degree and measure of former times. The fact cannot be disputed; and I am sorry it is so difficult to remedy this evil, and so easy to account for it. The principal cause of it is obvious; and naming the cause will shew from what quarter the most effectual remedy might be had, and ought to come. For in this great city every temptation to vice presents itself, in every shape that is most engaging, and most pernicious. Those of the lowest rank are often witnesses to what is done by those in the highest; and being more prone to imitate what is bad, than what is good in their superiors, when they have been once seduced and encouraged by their example to break loose.

loose from the restraints of shame, and the awe of authority, they usually plunge themselves into the most destructive vices with a savage impetuosity, and *commit all uncleanness with greediness.*

A MISCHIEF so dreadful in its effects, calls upon every one, without distinction, to assist in checking it; and it may, to some degree, be checked, in a soft prevailing manner, by opposing to it the religious influence of this charity: and to what nobler purpose can this influence be applied in the service of the public, than that of reclaiming the profligate, instructing the ignorant, and confirming the well-disposed in the *belief and practice of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ?* Or what other branch of charity is there, which affords us so advantageous an opportunity of doing this substantial good to the most distressed of our fellow-christians and fellow-subjects? Where, but within the walls of an INFIRMARY, could this necessary wholesome instruction be tender'd to numbers at once, in the most critical season of seriousness and recollection, which perhaps is the only season, when many of them would not turn a deaf ear to such an instructor?

INDEED they who are relieved by this charity, are themselves most nearly concerned, to improve the blessing that is vouchsafed to them. This will and must chiefly depend upon themselves. If their own vicious excesses and debaucheries brought upon them the disorders, for which christian charity hath pro-

vided as good a remedy as wealth itself can purchase ; (and if this be their case, they themselves must know it) ; they have learned from sad experience, what are *the fruits of sin* ; they have also been admonished, that the end to which sin unrepented of leads, is not only that death, from which they have for the present been rescued by the help of other men's humanity ; but that death eternal, from which nothing can deliver them, but their own thorough reformation of life and manners. Such a reformation will make the pains and sickness, under which they so lately *languished as men without hope*, become the providential means of their receiving a benefit of far greater value than health, or even life itself. Without such a reformation, the blessing bestowed upon them will aggravate their guilt, and increase their punishment. Let them therefore remember, and lay to heart, this short admonition, that, when they are sent away whole from this house of medicine and instruction, what our Saviour once said to the man whom he had miraculously cured, he in effect says to each of these patients, “ Go thy way, sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee.”

IT may with just reason be expected, that instruction thus seasonably tender'd to the patients, will be no less successful in many instances, than the medicine that healed them : and I am persuaded that numbers, who were a burden to society, daily come out of INFIRMARIES found both in mind and body ; and, in the future course

course of their lives, act their part as useful members of the community : for religion, so far as the rules of it are followed, will guard and complete the cure, which the physic of charity hath wrought. This godlike exercise of benevolence, opens to us the true nature, and exhibits, as it were to our very senses, the lovely form of christian charity, which is a never-failing source of every human virtue, and divine comfort.

Now for our own sakes, we should be careful that our good actions are not destitute of that essential qualification which constitutes their moral worth in the sight of God. For even works of charity, if in performing them we seek the praise of men, or if we are excited to them by a mere impulse of compassion, without having God, or the will of God, in all our thoughts, however beneficial they may be to others, they will, in the final issue of things, *profit us nothing.*

THE conduct of our Saviour, as exhibited to us in the text, naturally led me into that train of reflections, which I have been pursuing : and if we meditate, as we ought, upon the manner in which Christ recommended to the world the religion he came down from heaven to promulge, engaging men to embrace it by no act of power but what was exerted in miracles of kindness ; if we consider further, that he prescribed to all mankind universal benevolence, as the fundamental law of his gospel, are we not shocked

at the folly and ingratitude of those, who, whilst they enjoy the light and benefit of revelation, labour to depreciate the wisdom and goodness of God, who vouchsafed it to us: and affect to set up benevolence, as of itself sufficient to answer all the purposes of human virtue, and social happiness: when it is certain, from the experience of all ages and countries, that those motives only, by which revelation strengthens and enlarges it, can make benevolence a compleat steady principle of action, adequate to all the wants, and commensurate to the existence, of a weak immortal creature.

CAN we, on the other hand, avoid expressing a just indignation at the wickedness of propagating such a religion as this, by methods repugnant to the clearest dictates of humanity? Can we enough detest the unfeeling hypocrisy of those, who pretend to shew their tenderness and compassion for the souls of men, by afflicting and torturing their bodies?

BUT *we have not so learned Christ*; and that plan of charity, which we are now assembled to promote, is a demonstration, to how much better purpose we have studied him. The arguments, by which I have endeavoured to explain the distinguishing character and extent of this branch of charity, which owes its very existence to christianity, are drawn from the example of Christ himself, and they are supported and enforced by the whole tenor of his gospel. Arguments founded

in such principles, are and must be alike applicable to every INFIRMARY, where religious instruction and medicine are jointly administered, in imitation of the pattern which Christ hath set us; and in conformity to that Spirit, by which he requires us to govern our intention, and regulate the exercise of our charity.

BUT the very name of the LONDON-HOSPITAL, and the destination of it, offer to our thoughts one consideration, which sets the particular utility and importance of such an INFIRMARY, in a most affecting light. From the prodigious number of inhabitants that swarm in this vast city, there naturally arises a consequence of a very singular kind, that those, who most want assistance, and seem to be always within reach of it, are furthest removed from the chance of having it. For in this immense neighbourhood, into which all ranks and orders of men are promiscuously crowded, that intercourse of acquaintance, which usually subsists between neighbours in towns, and even cities of a lesser extent, is for the most part industriously avoided. They, whose houses join, are often for that reason the greatest strangers to one another: and the poorer sort of this great body of people, that is, the bulk of them, are known perhaps to few above their own rank besides those who employ them; and to such also they in effect become unknown, as soon as they are discharged from their service, or unable for any time to attend it. So that a poor man, when he is confined to his bed by a disease or a misfortune, is shut up within the walls of his own obscure lodg-
ing,

ing, as in a desart, where no man dwelleth to aid or comfort him. The rich and the compassionate surround him on all sides, and yet he may have no means of making his hard case known to them, or of satisfying any one of them of the reality of it: for where there are so many impostors, every poor man, that is not known, is suspected. On the other hand, those that are most diligent in searching for the distressed, may not chance to find him, from that very circumstance, which renders his distress most deplorable. Cases of this sort, are, I am afraid, more frequent than they are thought to be, by those who are too deeply engaged in the cares of busines, or the pursuits of pleasure, to have much acquaintance with the dwellings or hardships of the poor. For perhaps at this very time, whilst I am pointing out to you the calamitous situation of the poor, numbers of them may lie languishing under sickness and want, unrelieved, unregarded, and unnoticed, near the seats of ease and luxury, within the weekly bills, which are, or ought to be to us, weekly lectures of mortality.

THIS evil cleaves so inseparably to the trade, the wealth, and the populousness of LONDON, and diffuses itself so widely, and so obscurely, amongst the thousands and ten thousands that are continually drawn into this common center of business and employment, that all the munificence of private charities, and the united aid of those public hospitals, which adorn and serve this great city, have not been able to furnish out an adequate remedy.

BUT the *LONDON-HOSPITAL* being particularly planned to answer this end ; and, upon that account, not being appropriated, as other hospitals are, to special classes of patients, hath now for many years been held forth as a general asylum for the poor, whenever distress, which to them is the necessary attendant of sickness, overtakes or over-powers them.

SUCH a supplemental house of medicine for the reception of the poor is, in a christian sense, a new-created fund for the convenience of the rich : a fund, in which they may, with full security, vest any portion of their substance ; for whatever is here lodged, will certainly be applied to the ease and comfort of those, who have the justest claim to it ; and it will return again, after many days, with an accumulated interest, into the bosom of the tender-hearted lender. For the scripture, in a familiar allusion to the prudential caution men take in transacting matters of property with one another, represents God himself as a standing surety for the poor, to make good the loan of charity : *He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord ; and look what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again.*

IT is not my intention, though I am invited by the occasion, and led by the subject, to enter into the praises of those, to whose prudent management and exact œconomy this hospital is so much indebted.

Their

Their works praise them ; and that perhaps is the only praise, which would not offend them. I shall also decline giving any invidious preference to the hospital, for whose benefit this discourse was more immediately designed ; for by the whole drift of it, I have endeavoured not to enlarge upon the superior excellency of any single infirmary, but to mark out to you the distinguishing character of this branch of charity, and to make you sensible of what importance that religious application of it is, which will raise it to the highest state of improvement.

THOSE who desire, and ought to be satisfied in that which is the most material article of enquiry, *viz.* What good the *LONDON-HOSPITAL* hath in fact done, and continues to do, may obtain the fullest satisfaction upon the clearest grounds, by consulting the annual accompts. Known facts, the dress in which truth is seen to most advantage, have in them a force of persuasion, which no words can reach without their concurrence : and the facts stated in those accompts are of such a nature, that they must strike the mind of each benefactor with a most pleasing sensation ; because they furnish an undoubted evidence of the success, with which his humanity hath been attended. They will also acquaint you with one circumstance of the hospital, very necessary to be thus laid before the public ; that the fund of it is too scanty to answer the supplications of the wretched, or the wishes of the compassionate. But the city, to whose use and

service this hospital is particularly dedicated, will not, I trust, suffer this obstruction to confine the operations of so beneficial a scheme, when it is in the power of so many good men to remove the restraint, and give a free course to the charity.

BUT though I have referred you to the accounts themselves, for a minute and full information of the state of the *LONDON-HOSPITAL*, I have transcribed from them one paragraph at large, because it demonstrates, that charity is there administered upon that plan of religious instruction, which I have been labouring to inculcate.

“ A CLERGYMAN of the church of *England* reads
“ prayers every day, and preaches every Sunday, and
“ reads prayers morning and afternoon; administers
“ the sacrament regularly every month, and is ready
“ to visit, pray by, and administer the sacrament at all
“ times, when required, to the patients of the ward.”

Now for the just praise and encouragement of such of my brethren as clearfully dedicate a large part of their time, to the comfort and instruction of their fellow-christians, in this hour of distress, this season of moral discipline and improvement, permit me here to observe to you, that notwithstanding other labours in the word and doctrine of Christ, being exercised in a more extensive public scene, may obtain and deserve from men a more splendid reward, and a more general

neral applause ; there are no endeavours, which will gratify the christian labourer with a more solid lasting satisfaction, than that of which I am now speaking : for there are few instances of the ministerial office more necessary, or more likely to produce their proper fruits. And I have good reason to be persuaded, that the diligent minister of the sick, whose office it is in the *LONDON-HOSPITAL*, to dispense this religious branch of the charity, doth, by a conscientious discharge of his duty, reap this satisfaction : nor can I doubt, but that he looks upon the happy effects of his labours, as the most valuable part of his recompence for attending upon the poor patients, whilst he observes them, with hearts full of gratitude, desirous to be taught and exhorted by him, to make a right use of that health and strength, which, by the blessing of God, this medicinal house of charity hath restored to them.

FROM the paragraph I have just quoted from the annual accounts, it is evident, how religion stands incorporated into the very plan, upon which the *LONDON-HOSPITAL* was formed. And I should not do justice to my subject, if I omitted to take special notice of another admirable regulation in this charity : for it is a regulation, which shews, that those who projected and settled the plan of it, carefully weighed the several cases of distress ; and with all the tenderness of compassion, made a provision for reaching out immediate relief to such of them, as would admit of

no delay—“ All accidents, whether recommended
“ or not, are received at any hour of the day or
“ night.”

Now it is from these casual events, which lie too deeply concealed in their causes, to be foreseen by any human sagacity, or prevented by any human care, that the most dreadful calamities often overwhelm us at once, when we thought ourselves farthest removed from danger. There is not a single moment in any man's life, when he may not be struck and crushed by one or other of them ; and from a sound and vigorous state of body, become a helpless cripple, or a mangled carcase.

BUT besides those numberless accidents, to which we are all equally exposed, every profession, trade, or employment is subject, more or less, to peculiar accidents of its own. Hence it is that the variety of professions and trades, which are followed by the busy multitudes of this metropolis, produce almost every day a shocking variety of accidents ; which, when they disable the industrious labourer, deprive perhaps a whole family at once of the labour that fed and cloathed them.

CASES of this sort can want no recommendation, but that melancholy one which they bring with them ; nor could humanity dictate a more effectual provision than

than is here made for their receiving help as soon as they can apply for it.

IT is indeed a provision exactly correspondent to the original design of the *LONDON-HOSPITAL*, and the situation of those, from whose contributions it derives so large a share of the liberality, by which it is maintained. For this readiness, this solicitude to pour balm into the wounds of the seafaring man, the mechanic, or the hired workman, doth in an eminent degree become and adorn the character of a merchant, whose riches are and must be acquired from the hazards which the poor run in his service. Indeed *his* riches, even after he is in possession of them, are still at the mercy of accidents peculiar to merchants; and can no more be preserved, than they could have been acquired, without the special blessing of providence, and the protection of the supreme ruler of all things, who maketh even *winds and storms fulfil his word*, and steadily directs the most casual events with unerring wisdom and perfect goodness.

THE precarious wealth of this world so applied to christian purposes upon christian principles, will entitle the possessor of it to treasures in heaven, of which no accidents can rob him. Of these treasures he will have the full enjoyment, when the present distinctions between rich and poor, are to be done away: and when even compassion, which, in this vale of sorrow, is one of the most necessary and endearing affections of

our common nature, having no longer any objects to pity or relieve, in a state where all are happy, will be for ever resolved back again into that universal benevolence from whence it flows.

To conclude; an apostle of Jesus Christ, who *spake as he was moved by the Spirit of God*, hath expressly assured us, that before the wonderful scheme of our redemption through Christ is finally closed, *this corruptible body of ours will put on incorruption, this mortal will be cloathed with immortality*, and become a fit tabernacle for an immortal spirit to dwell in. Wherefore I beseech you, my beloved brethren, abound ever more and more in works of mercy, to the bodies and souls of men: In such you faithfully copy the example, and fulfil the law of Christ. By such you make your *calling and election sure*, and will establish your claim to these exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel, when death itself is swallowed up in victory.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 14. Line 4. for *impelled*, read *moved*.

Page 18. Lines 10 and 11. dele *peculiar*.